Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, Plant 4 HAER No. CA-145-4-C
Worker Cottage (Building 113)
Bishop Creek
Bishop Vicinity
Inyo County
California

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Near Bishop Creek in North 1/2 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 19, Township 7 South, Range 32 East, M.D.M, Inyo County, California. Eastern Sierra Nevada approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the town of Bishop, California, and 225 air miles due north of Los Angeles.

Date of Construction: 1927

Builder: Unknown

Present Owner: Southern California Edison Company
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770

Original Use: Worker Cottage

Present Use: Worker Cottage

Significance: Building 113 Plant 4 (formerly Building No. 20, Plant 4), a small bungalow cottage, is a rare, surviving example of early worker's housing at the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System. Built in 1905, Plant 4 was the first on the Bishop Creek System, and it remains the system's operating headquarters. This house was constructed from a kit prefabricated by Pacific Ready Cut Homes Inc., of Los Angeles. The Bishop Creek System is considered significant for its role: (1) in the expansion of hydroelectric generation technology, (2) in the development of eastern California, and (3) in the development of long-distance power transmission and distribution.

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Environmental Affairs Division
Rosemead, CA 91770

Date: August 27, 1995

I. DESCRIPTION

Building 113, Plant 4 is a small, one and one half story Craftsman style cottage located about 4250 feet northeast of the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System Plant 4 powerhouse on the east side of the main Plant 4 residential street. This cottage was part of a residential enclave of 12 houses, most of which have been demolished, where the Plant 4 workers lived (Photo 145-4-C-1). The project area is about five miles southwest of the town of Bishop, Inyo County, California. The Bishop Creek System is primarily located along the south, middle, and north forks of Bishop Creek on the steep eastern slopes of the southern Sierra Nevada Range. Plant 4 is one of five plants sited at varying elevations along Bishop Creek. Situated in the middle of the Bishop Creek System, Plant 4 is northeast of Plants 2 and 3, and southwest of Plants 5 and 6.

The Building 113 lot is level with the main Plant 4 residential street that passes in front (west) of the house (Photo 145-4-C-2), but is about three feet above, and separated by a stone retaining wall, from the level of the street that runs behind (east) of the house (Photo 145-4-C-3). A paved driveway leads from the street in front of the house around the south side to a two vehicle garage; the street and the driveway are separated from the Building 113 yard by a low concrete curb (Photos 145-4-C-3 and 145-4-C-4). This curb is penetrated at the street and at the driveway in front of the house by two concrete paths leading to the steps to the front porch, and on the south side of the house by a concrete path leading to the side door to the utility room and kitchen (Photo 145-4-C-5). The small front yard consists of a lawn and a mature tree off the northwest corner of the house (Photo 145-4-C-2). The much larger back yard consists of a relatively spacious lawn and several shrubs set around the perimeter of the house. An outdoor clothesline and satellite television dish are set in the lawn at the north east corner of the house (Photos 145-4-C-6 and 145-4-C-7).

Building 113 is a one and one half story, rectangular plan (22 x 46 feet), bungalow style house built in 1927. Prefabricated by Pacific Ready Cut Homes Inc. of Los Angeles, the structure sits on a concrete foundation and has a side gabled roof with clipped ends (SCE drawing 570950-0). A bungalow-type porch consisting of a concrete deck and an end-gabled clipped-end roof supported by two groupings of three wooden posts at each corner projects from the front of the house (Photos 145-4-C-2 and 145-4-C-4). In 1967, a 14-foot, end gable-roofed addition was constructed to the rear of the older structure without the clipped gable end detail (Photos 145-4-C-5 and 145-4-C-6). The original structure's initial siding of narrow clapboard has been replaced with asbestos shingles that also cover the exterior of the 1967 addition.

The exterior walls are pierced by 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows in paired arrangements at the north front (west end) and south side front of the house and in a single arrangement at the northside front of the house, 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows on the south side adjacent to the door to the kitchen and below the clipped gable end, and on the north side into the bedroom immediately east of the bathroom. Aluminum-frame sliding glass windows pierce the exterior walls on the 1967 addition, the bathroom, and below the north side clipped gable end. The front entrance has been converted to an aluminum-frame sliding glass door. A rectangular louvered vent is located centrally in the porch gable end.

The medium-pitched, asphalt-shingled roof is finished with clay tiles along the ridge lines, with projected purlins on the gable ends (except on the 1967 addition) and exposed rafters under the eaves. A brick chimney projects above the central portion of the roof (Photo 145-4-C-4).

The house has about 900 square feet of interior space divided into six downstairs rooms (a living room, three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a combined kitchen/utility room) and an attic. The house's compact plan has no halls with the rooms opening directly one to another. The original interior floor plan shows a house comprised of two bedrooms, a living room, a bathroom, a kitchen, and a screen porch behind (east) of the kitchen (SCE drawing 570950-0).

The 15 foot by 12 1/2 foot living room is formed from a combination of the original living room and the front bedroom. It retains original 6-light over 1-light, double-hung windows and wood surrounds in groups of two (west wall and south wall) and singly (north wall) (Photos 145-4-C-8 and 145-4-C-9). The doorway to the kitchen on the east wall also retains the original wood surround. The ceiling is acoustical tile; floors are wall to wall carpet. Lighting is provided by two ceiling light fixtures.

The 17 foot by 11 1/2 foot kitchen/utility room was formed from a combination of the original kitchen and the original screen porch. The kitchen expanded into about half of the porch space, the rear (east) wall of the screen porch was modified construction of the 1967 rear addition, and a new exterior doorway (utilizing probably the original fixed 1-light window over three-paneled rear door) was placed in the south wall where one of the original screen panels stood (Photos 145-4-C-10 and 145-4-C-11). Adjacent to this door is an aluminum-frame sliding glass window that also occupies the former space of one of the porch screens. Built-in cabinetry is located over the utility outlets next to the outside door, and over and around the sink (Photos 145-4-C-12 and 145-4-C-13). The kitchen/utility area is connected to

the southeast rear bedroom via a solid door on the east wall. It is connected to the north west bedroom through an original five-panel door with wood surround on the north wall (Photo 145-4-C-10). The ceiling is drywall; the floors are linoleum. Lighting is provided by single electrical ceiling fixtures in the kitchen area and in the utility area. A smoke detector is located on the ceiling in front of the doorway into the northwest bedroom.

The 10 foot by 12 foot northwest bedroom is the only remaining one of the two original bedrooms. It is unaltered except for the doorway to the 1967 addition on the east (rear) wall. Original five-panel doors with wood surrounds open to the kitchen/utility area, the access stairway to the attic, and the bathroom (Photos 145-4-C-14, 145-4-C-15, and 145-4-C-16). An original single 1-light over 1-light, double-hung window with wood surround pierces the north wall. The ceiling is acoustic tile; the floor is linoleum tile. The room is lighted by a single electrical light fixture.

Although the original tub, sink, and toilet have been replaced with more modem counterparts, and the window has been replaced with an aluminum-frame sliding glass model, the bathroom is in its original size and configuration (Photo 145-4-C-17). Built-in cabinets are located adjacent to the sink. The room is lighted by a single electrical ceiling fixture and wall fixture over the sink and mirror. The floor is linoleum. The bathroom can be accessed only through the northwest bedroom.

The 1967 addition at the rear of the house involved construction of two bedrooms, one a mirror of the other (Photos 145-4-C-18, 145-4-C-19, 145-4-C-20, and 145-4-C-21). The southeast rear bedroom is accessed from the kitchen/utility area; the northeast rear bedroom is accessed from the northwest bedroom. Both rear bedrooms have built-in cabinets with a sliding door closet on the east wall, aluminum-frame sliding glass windows, acoustical tile ceilings with a single electrical ceiling light fixture, and linoleum tile flooring.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Please refer to the "Historical Context" sections in the general report for Bishop Creek, Plant 4 (HAER No. CA-145-4) for historical information regarding Plant 4 and the Bishop Creek System.

Each of the five Bishop Creek power plants, and Control Station, was originally developed with an associated residential complex occupied by operating and maintenance crews; all have

now been removed with exception of small remaining enclaves at Plant 4, Control Station, and a single house at Plant 6. A number of these houses, like Building 113 at Plant 4, were constructed during the 1920s to accommodate the additional workers needed to operate the power plants after the final Bishop Creek expansion phase (Theodoratus Cultural Research 1988:A-90). The company development of employee living areas, especially at Plant 4, permitted comprehensive planning seldom seen in privately developed residential areas during this period. The setting of Building 113 Plant 4 still retains many elements of the old residential planning in this area, including picturesque curving streets, houses sited on terraces with stone retaining walls, manicured front lawns with unified groupings of shade trees, and integrally designed lighting standards.

III. SOURCES

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1969 American Architecture Since 1780. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This Historic American Engineering Record documentation of Building 113 Plant 4, a cottage at Plant 4 of the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, was undertaken because the building represents excess housing. SCE is continuing to automate the Bishop Creek power plants. The automation of the power plants has made it unnecessary to have on-site crews, thus, residential units like this cottage have become obsolete.

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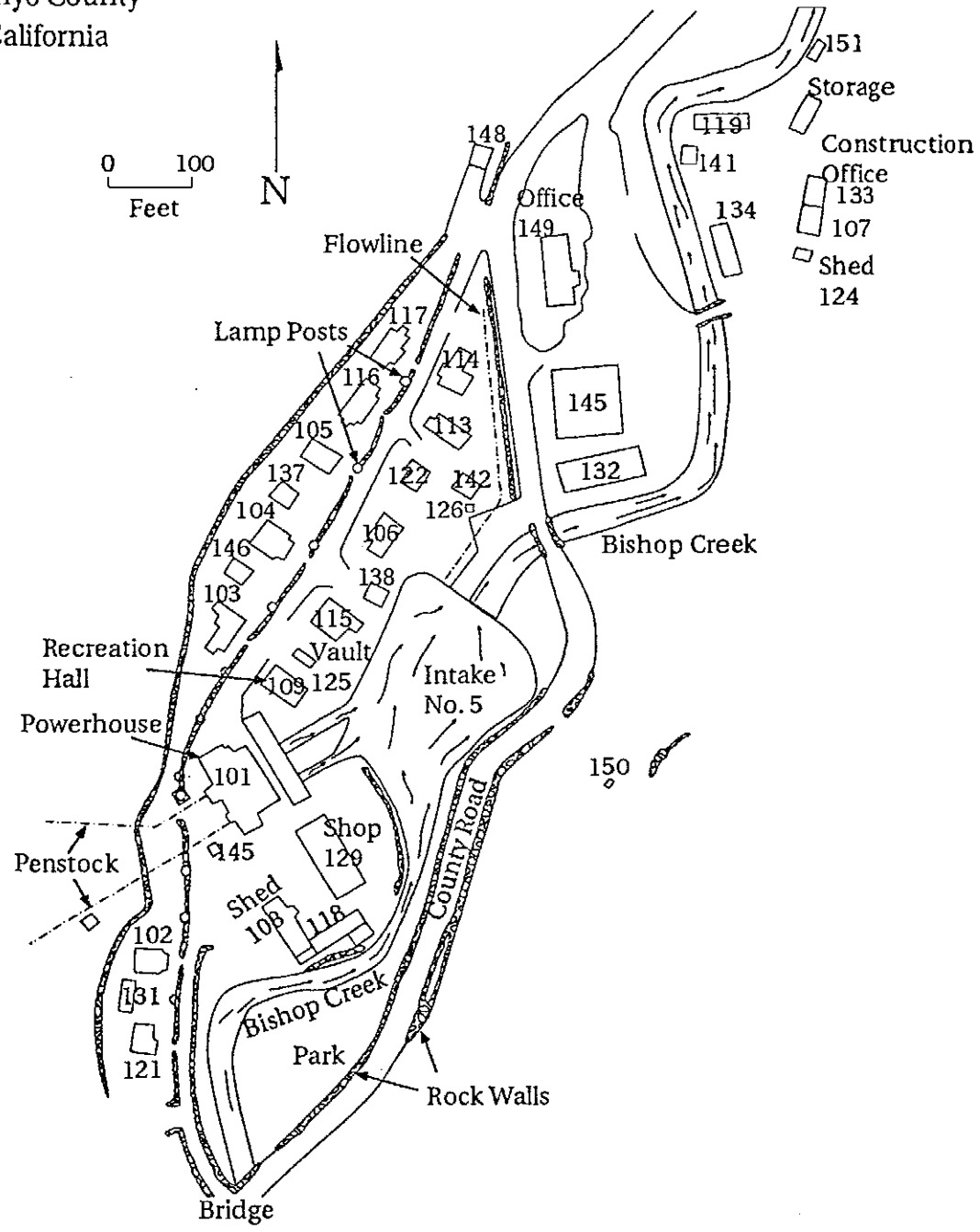

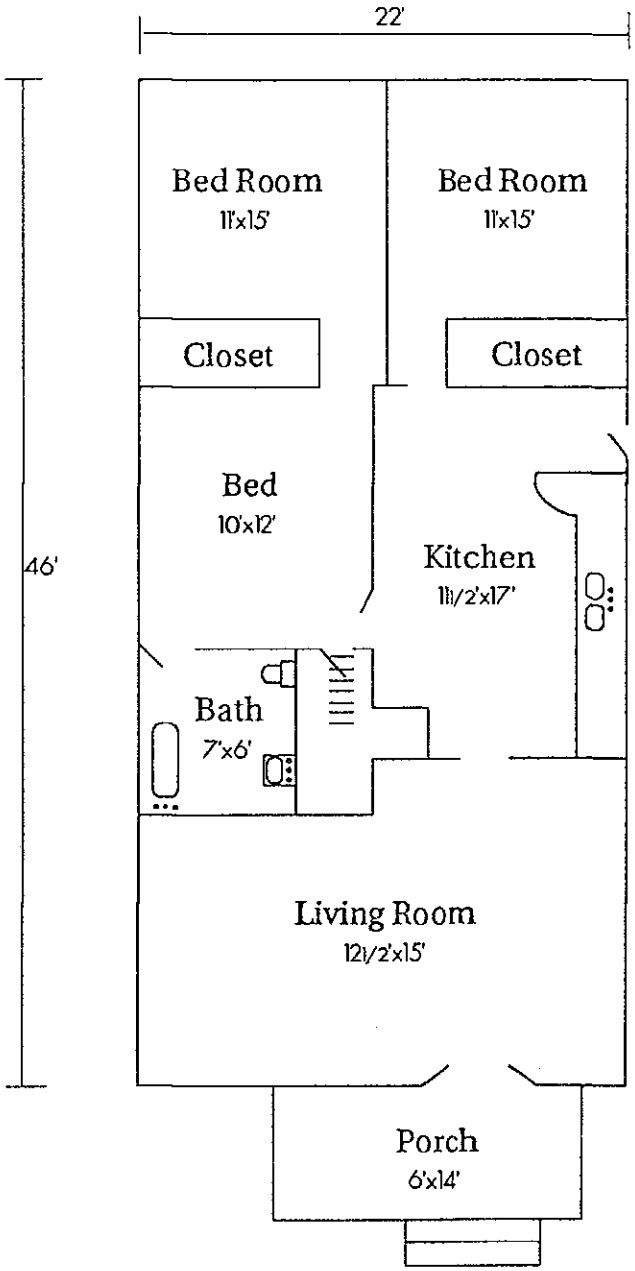
22'
46'
Bed Room
11'x15'
Bed Room
11'x15'
Closet
Closet
Bed
10'x12'
Kitchen
11 1/2'x17'
Bath
7'x6'
Living Room
12 1/2'x15'
Porch
6'x14'